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JUDAS THE ISCARIOT.

To every human consciousness is opened a sense of the two possibilities of our existence—the higher and lower—commonly termed good and evil. Heaven and hell, zenith and nadir of the spiritual universe, are represented in an ethical classification of forms and forces, whose scientific completeness is hidden under the absurdities of mythology. In the ages before science discovered to man his heritage of animalism, from which he can no more be detached than he can “jump off his shadow,” the contrast between the sensual and the ideal self was inexplicable by any natural hypothesis. Though primitive philosophy had held that the same tree bore good and evil, religious sentiment interpreted that as meaning the knowledge of good and evil,—these being separated into the Twins, white and dark, found in every theology. In all fable and folklore these white and dark spirits have their respective incarnations, in harmony with observable facts.

There are forces in men which in some primitive phase of society acted organically, but survive in a further phase, where they act inorganically. Their ancient motive or cause being extinct, these inorganic (*i. e.*, anti-social) forces appear diabolic—evil for evil’s sake. Hence the notion of incarnate fiends. Incarnation is no mystery. By purposed selection man breeds in a bulldog an exaltation of ferocity only ideal in himself; that thoroughbred brute will hate without motive, and cannot be drawn from the improvised foe by torture; he will often die rather than let go, a martyr of self-sacrificing ferocity. This creation by man of an evil genius outside the normal self-preserving instincts, is paralleled in survivals of brute craft, cruelty, and lust, in the human shape, thereby invested with a refined apparatus for evil unknown to any animal. This evolved inhumanity, personified as the Adversary of God, has in every age been seen in evil in-

carnations confronting the incarnation of God. Thus side by side appear Jesus and Judas. While looking on the Oberammergau Passion Play I thought Judas the most phenomenal of the figures. By a local survival of the fittest for this all-absorbing enterprise of the region the sacred pictures of church walls are made flesh. Judas' face is his fortune. His make-up is from the diabolic wardrobe of ages. I found him personally a gentle and pious man. Could we meet the original Judas a like respect might ensue. But he has been conventionalized by centuries. The Beloved Disciple is reported as almost seeing Satan enter Judas during the Last Supper, and it is artistically added, he "went out, and it was night." This "night" was easily spiritualized, and a later writer knows that "Judas fell away, that he might go to his own place." Thus Judas was made the infranatural counterpart of a supernatural divinity. Judas's gratuitous villainies were easily explained as mysteries of preordained diabolic purpose; doubts as to whether Christ would have chosen such a disciple, or intrusted him with the common purse, leading him into temptation—were silenced by reference to the incomprehensibility of divine counsels. In the apocryphal "*Gospel of the Infancy*," it is related that a demoniacal boy, brought to the child Jesus, strikes him, whereupon Jesus weeps, and Satan comes out of the boy in the form of a furious dog. This boy was Judas. According to another legend, Judas's mother had a dream before his birth that her son would murder his father and sell his God. To avert this the child was sunk in the sea, but was cast on shore. He was adopted by a king and queen, who had a son, whom Judas slew. He fled to Judea, became the page of Pilate, and, after the predestined murder of his father, learned from his mother her dream. In terror and contrition Judas hears of a prophet who forgives sins; when he throws himself at his feet, Jesus, recognizing his predestined betrayer, accepts him as a disciple, and intrusts him with the purse so that Judas's avarice might be excited and the plan of salvation not fail. Judas thus became Heir Apparent to the infernal throne, and in mural pictures of Eastern churches he appears seated on the knees of a majestic Satan. But in western Christendom the idea long prevailed that Jesus was moving invisibly about the world, keeping his eye on every movement of mankind

until the day when he should judge them ; Judas appears to have been resuscitated in some regions for a counter-wandering, but the exigencies of Roman Christianity demanded a less localized and less penitent devil. Thus Judas was superseded by Antichrist, and his story became threaded on the continuous line of undying wanderers. Since writing my monograph on "The Wandering Jew," I have found reason to suspect that the eternal wanderer of our European legend, Ahasuerus, derives his reputation of having been a shoemaker, who struck Jesus with a last, from a popular derivation of the word "Iscariot" from Hebrew *scortea*, "a leathern apron."*

Disraeli's championship of Judas, as a self-sacrificing disciple willing to be accursed through all time in order to complete conditions necessary for human salvation, remains a monument of his audacity and Christianized cynicism. His remorseless logic, however, has long been felt. Various theories have sought to vindicate the divine purity from the appearance of having prearranged and required such baseness and treason for its ends. These are signs of the advancing ethical spirit which is humanizing Christianity. The enthroned Christ seems to be laying aside the crown once more, and becoming a plain workman. His human life, sympathy, radicalism, are dwelt on. As Jesus has been reinvested with humanity, so may the diabolized figure of Judas ; the same humanity includes him and the Teacher he is said to have betrayed. An artist once painted a lovely child

*Possibly this leathern apron suggested as its holy counterpoise the apron of St. Veronica, which retained the portrait of Jesus when she wiped his brow, just after Ahasuerus had struck him on his way to Calvary. Goethe recognized the poetic value of this subject, and designed a poem in which the shoemaker Ahasuerus is a sort of Socratic Hans Sachs, at whose shop Pharisees and Sadducees, and Jesus with his disciples, would often stop. Being interested only in the world, Ahasuerus yet loves Jesus and tries to persuade him to stop going about with idlers, and drawing people away from their work. Jesus tries to inspire him with his own aims. After the condemnation of Jesus, Judas rushes into the shop of Ahasuerus in great distress ; he relates that being fully convinced that Jesus would declare himself regent, he had incited the priesthood to an arrest for which they had not courage. He says that the disciples were all armed and all would have gone well had not the Lord given himself up. Judas goes off and hangs himself. Ahasuerus, as the sufferer passes, vehemently reproaches him for his folly, when Veronica covers the fainting man's face, and on her apron Ahasuerus beholds the features not of the sufferer of the moment, but of the same transfigured. He hears the words, "Over the earth shalt thou wander till thou once more see me in this form." (*Dichtung und Wahrheit*, xv.)

as an infant Jesus. Twenty years later, having to paint the Last Supper, he found a model for his Judas in an imprisoned murderer. As he scrutinized the face of his Judas it grew familiar, and he ultimately found that his Jesus and Judas represented the childhood and the manhood of the same person.

It is a notable fact that, while there have been historic doubts as to the existence of Jesus, few have questioned that of Judas : so pessimist is the world ! Those who resolve Christ into a solar myth might find much support in the burials of Judas as " Winter " in some remote parts of Europe, and the Good Friday scourgings of his effigy in Spanish countries. Although there is in the case suggestion of an onomatopoetic myth, " Judas," being the Greek form of " Judah," a possible personification of the Jewish race betraying their Messiah to the Roman, yet in a fragment of the lost Aramaic Gospel there is mention of " Judas the Iscariot." This supplies a strong probability of the existence of a disciple so called. But personally he seems lost in a labyrinth of contradictions. He is said, in the fourth Gospel, to have been the purse-bearer of Jesus and the Twelve, also to have taken money from the bag dishonestly—statements unsupported by the other Gospels. If Judas had such a good position for the exercise of thievish industry, would he have terminated it for twenty dollars ? Matthew alone mentions the amount of the bribe, with suspicious exactitude, one hardly sufficient to purchase a cemetery for strangers, as others state. Matthew and Mark say Judas kissed Jesus ; Luke says he approached for that purpose ; John says nothing about a kiss, but represents Jesus as hastening to surrender himself to the soldiers, among whom was Judas. As to the end of Judas, it is variously stated that he hanged himself ; that he bought a field and fell down dead in it ; that he threw down the money before those who had bribed him. To those unable to harmonize these things by an act of faith, the following considerations may be of interest.

The title of Judas " the Iscariot " has from earliest times been variously explained. There are six theories of the word (1) From Kartan, in Galilee (Josh. xxi. 32). (2) From Greek *kariotides*, date-trees. (3) Iscariot has been derived from Hebrew *scortea*, a leathern apron, as already stated ; " Judas with the apron " was applied to him as bearer of the bag or scrip.

Lightfoot, on the authority of Rabbi Nathan, describes the scrip as "a kind of [leather] apron with divers purses or pockets made in it." As Jesus forbade the disciples to carry purse or scrip, Judas, if he did so, must have been an official exception ; but is it not more probable that his alleged office, unknown to the earlier evangelists, is a legend grown out of this derivation of Iscariot from *scortea*? (4) Iscariot has been derived from Hebrew *ascara*, "strangling." Is this etymology the real basis of the death by hanging? (5) Iscariot has been supposed equivalent to Issacharite. The transliteration of the usual Hebrew of Issachar is *Yissásekár*. One need only search accounts of Issachar to find suggestions of the Iscariot legend. Issachar means "he takes up his wages." (Gen. xxx. 18.) "And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I gave my bondmaid to my husband : and she called his name Issachar." The significance of the name labeled the tribe (Gen. xlix. 14).

"Issachar is a bony ass
Couching between two sheepfolds :
He saw rest, that it was good,
And the land that it was pleasant :
He bowed his shoulder to bear
And became a tributary of labor."

Issachar, legendary offspring of a hired husband, might readily be recalled by a name so near his own as Iscariot, who in turn would have to bow his shoulder to bear the Issacharite legend. Iscariot couches between the Judaic and Christian sheepfolds ; desires the inner rest, but also the land (bought with his bribe) ; becomes a slave unto tribute.

(6) It is now generally agreed among Christian scholars that Iscariot is from Heb. *Ish K'rioth*, "man of K'rioth," a town in the south of Judah. Learned Jews, however, says Iscariot means "of the tribe of Issachar." In this case the legend that Judas became the slave of hire, and bought land, is mere mythopoeic growth from an innocent tribal distinction. If the epithet means "man of Kerioth," all the other derivations are fictitious, mere similarities of sound. The legends that Judas was a purse-bearer, that he couched between two parties, bought land, took up his wages, and was strangled, may all have come out of unconscious puns on the word Iscariot !

As to the origin of other details of the story the candor of

Matthew has not left us ignorant. In anticipation of a doubt that the police of Jerusalem could hardly have needed to bribe any disciple to point out a notorious public teacher, Luke and John suggest that the authorities were afraid of the people, and paid Judas to guide them to a secret retreat; but Matthew finds his adequate explanation of all anomalies in the necessity that prophesies should be fulfilled. This writer even seems to explain the matter to Jesus, who says, "I sat daily in the temple teaching, and ye took me not." But, adds Matthew, "all this is come to pass that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." The very words ascribed to Jesus, "He that dipped his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of Man goeth as it is written," etc., point with precision to Psalm xl., where it is written, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." There is here a foregone necessity of treachery on the part of a disciple, and of one who partook of the Last Supper. And that no sign of the expected Messiah should be unfulfilled, the thirty pieces are introduced: "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, 'And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was priced,' " etc. The passage is in Zachariah, not Jeremiah, and no straining can make it refer to the Messiah.

It will thus be seen that every item in the confused legend of Judas is mythical. There is left only a probability that some action on Judas's part caused these sinister significances to be given to his innocent title, Iscariot. What that action was cannot be ascertained, but withdrawal of the Iscariot-mythology leaves untouched a few points of interest. There is nothing improbable in the assertion that Judas protested against Mary's waste on Jesus's feet of costly ointment that might have been sold for the poor. He may have given voice to the "indignation" of other disciples. This would show Judas as a rather hard type of radical, no doubt; were he in New York he would protest against building a six-million cathedral amid suffering thousands. It is the misfortune of such men that they are not always able to except from their humane secularism the value of a sentiment such as that which filled not only the house of Simon, but the Christian world with the perfume shed by Mary on the weary feet of Jesus. Mary's kisses on those feet may possibly have suggested the tra-

dition of her reprover's treacherous kisses. Nevertheless, Judas may have so greeted Jesus at the time of his arrest. The 'hail Master' and the kiss may have been genuine. He might so have initiated a predicted crisis. Jesus had kindled high hopes among these humble and oppressed Jews; nor were his plans peaceful. "Ye which have followed Me, shall sit upon twelve thrones." "I came not to send peace, but a sword." "He that hath none, let him sell his cloak and buy a sword." "They said, Lord, here are two swords, and he said, it is enough." That, in the revolution to which these and other sayings pointed, the Messiah might be slain, was an idea no Jew could conceive, even had Jesus not declared that no man could take his life. The disciples had shown impatience, and asked "When shall these things be?" Jesus had assured them "This generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished." Perhaps Judas, with the fanatical faith of John Brown, challenged a collision with enormous odds, never doubting that twelve legions of angels would appear if necessary. He may have led the soldiers to the retreat beyond Cedron. Several of the disciples were armed, and may have shared Judas's hopes. Indeed, John will not admit that either Judas or the soldiers had any power over Jesus: the Lord advanced and said, 'I am He,' and the officials all went backward and fell to the ground. But the disciples were in dismay. The theory of treachery is hardly consistent with the subsequent action attributed to Judas, so far as this has not been shown mythical. Where he had looked to see a triumphant Messiah, he saw now an innocent man—a beloved friend and teacher—led away under arrest to probable execution. "When he saw what he had done," so terribly in contrast to his expectation, he repented of his impatient action. He had taken the metaphors of Jesus too literally; his imagination was not equal to all eventualities; but all the more can such take to heart the thing seen and realized. When the rest of the disciples "forsook him and fled," when Peter denied him with oaths, Judas alone seems to have confronted the chief priests and elders and testified to the innocence of Jesus.

MONCURE D. CONWAY.